



Message from Regional Administrator Nuby Fowler

Making a Difference in the Gulf Coast

It has been nine months since the Gulf Coast was devastated by the most unprecedented natural disaster in recent American history. For many survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma, life will never be the same: homes, jobs, pets, and family members lost. The experts have calculated the recovery cost will be in the trillions. But as we all know, some things simply cannot be replaced.

America's response to this catastrophe has been equally unprecedented. From almost every sector of this country, be it public, private or governmental, Americans have opened their hearts and committed the resources to support the region as it rebuilds. Certainly no one should expect that recovery to happen overnight; the truth is we are making progress. SBA's role in disaster recovery is to assist individuals, non profits, and businesses rebuild their homes and places of business so that they can put their lives back in order and their employees back to work. I am proud to say that we are doing just that.

SBA has organized the largest workforce effort in the agency's history to process gulf coast recovery loans. Over 4,000 professionals have been enlisted to process disaster loan applications, and they have done great work. We have already set a record for the largest volume of loans approved for any disaster. In addition, our district offices, which are typically focused entirely on business development, have been brought in to support the effort and are processing applications as well.

Recent press accounts have brought into question the speed with which SBA is handling disaster loan applications. The truth is SBA disaster loans have always been intended primarily for long-term rebuilding and reconstruction of damaged home and businesses. The thousands of homeowners and businesses who are successfully rebuilding their lives getting their businesses back in operation thanks to SBA are proof of the work we are doing. Every week I hear the remarkable stories of businesses that, through hard work and a little help from SBA, have already turned this catastrophe around and are helping their local economies rebuild by selling their goods and services and by creating and retaining jobs. SBA's responsibility to the victims of these storms is real and so is our commitment to doing whatever it takes to help these individuals and their communities get back to business.

Region IV Administrator Nuby Fowler
